

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

GALATIANS LESSON 3 (Chapter 5)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Kevin Pendergrass.

Welcome to the Gospel of Christ. This is the third lesson in our study of the Book of Galatians. To summarize this book thus far, Paul had been begging and pleading with these Christians not to fall away, and not to go back under the Old Law. Paul previously had been with these people face to face. In fact, before they had become Christians, he was the one who had converted them. He had established these congregations, and had brought the people to Christ. Yet when Paul left, false teachers came in and began to teach that people were not only to follow Christ, but also were to go back under the Old Law in order to be a “Jewish Christian.” People were told that they had to go back under the Old Law in order to follow its ordinances. And in so doing, they had to go back under bondage. Paul rebuked these Christians and asked, “How could you be doing that? Why would you want to go back under bondage? How could you have the mindset of even thinking about going back under the Old Law and going back under bondage?” Paul spends a great deal of time in this letter telling the people about Christian freedom in order to explain to them that no longer are they under the Mosaic Law. Instead, they have freedom in Christ.

But before we talk about what it really means to have “freedom in Christ,” I want us to talk about how one receives this Christian freedom. Can **anyone** have this freedom in Christ? Does everyone have freedom just because they were born? Can a person say, “I was born, and I love God, so that means I have freedom in Christ”? Of course not. Paul tells us how people receive this freedom. In Galatians 3:26-29 Paul had answered the question of how and when people receive this Christian freedom.

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

According to Galatians 3, how does a person receive Christian freedom? A person receives this freedom when he becomes a Christian. A person cannot have Christian freedom until he is a Christian. So when does one become a Christian? As Paul explained, a person becomes a Christian when he enters into Christ—which is at the point of being baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). At that point a person is in Christ, and has this Christian freedom. This is the only way to receive Christian freedom. If a person has not yet been baptized for the forgiveness of sins, then he is not a true child of God, and he does not have true Christian freedom. If a person seeks to be saved another way, then he is not truly saved because the only way to be saved is through Christ—which means coming into contact with His blood at the point of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4). How does one receive Christian freedom? It is received at the point that a person becomes a Christian—which is when the person is baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins.

Now, notice what Paul says in Galatians 5:1 about the liberty and freedom that is found in Christ. Remember the context. Paul is begging the Christians not to go back under the Old Law, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. He then says, “Stand

fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” We are to stand fast in Christian freedom and liberty. We are not to go back under the Old Law. Paul has explained that we no longer are under the Old Law because we have Christian freedom. But we must stand fast in that freedom.

But what does it mean to have Christian freedom? Some people have twisted Galatians 5:1 in order to make the verse mean something that it does not mean. In 2 Peter 3:16, Peter warned about false teachers who would twist the Scriptures to make them say what they wanted them to say. It does not say what they want it to say, so they twist it to make it fit their needs. That is what a lot of people have done with Galatians 5:1. They say, “Paul says that we are in freedom, so that means we can do anything we want.” What does Christian freedom mean? We know that if we have been baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, then we have Christian freedom. We know that we no longer are under the Old Law. But what does it mean to have Christian freedom? Before we talk about that, I want to talk about what Christian freedom is not. Because there are so many different views about what Christian freedom is, I want to talk about some of those views and show that Paul is not saying that Christian freedom is a license to sin.

The first thing that Christian freedom is not is a license to sin. Just because a person becomes a Christian does not mean that God says, “Here’s a license; go out and live your life anyway you want because you are free and you can do anything you want.” In Romans 6:1-2 Paul said, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” When people asked if they could continue to sin and simply hope that grace would cover them, Paul said “Certainly not!” Grace is not a license to sin. God forbid that people develop that mindset! Paul also dealt with this idea in Galatians 2:17-18 when he said, “But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” What is Paul’s point? He asked if Christ had called them out of darkness into light so that they could be sinners. He asked if God had called them out of a sinful world and lifestyle so that they could continue living like that. Of course not. If that was the case, then that would make Christ a minister of sin. He did not save us from sin so that we could continue to sin. He saved us from sin so that we would **stop** sinning. Freedom in Christ does not mean that we can live any lifestyle we want to live just because we are free in Christ. In Jude 4 Jude talked about how false teachers would have a false view on Christian freedom and Christian grace. “Certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation—ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is exactly what some people have done with Christian freedom and grace. They have made those things something they are not. And by doing so, they have become false teachers who are leading people to Hell because they are teaching people that they can live any kind of life they want to because they have this freedom. Paul and Jude explained that this is not the case. The Hebrews writer said in Hebrews 10:26 that if we “sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” If we continue to sin after we have been saved from our sins, there will no longer remain a sacrifice for our sins. We make Christ’s sacrifice of no importance at all if we continue to sin.

The kind of life that we need to live is discussed in Colossians 3:5-10 where Paul said,

“Put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice,

blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.”

What is Paul's point? He is saying that Christians are new people who must put off the old man. They cannot live their old lifestyle because they are new creatures. Therefore, they cannot continue to live the lives they once lived. In Ephesians 4:22-24 Paul offered a similar statement when he said that Christians had “put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” and were instead to “be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” We must put on the new man, and not try to continue to be the old man. When are we “the old man”? We are the old man when we live in the old ways. When are we “the new man”? We are the new man when we obey the commands that God has given us. We must put off our former conduct. I've even heard people say, “God does not really want us to continue in a sinful lifestyle, but it is OK to do it since we have freedom in Christ.” That is the exact opposite of what the Bible's point is on this matter. Yes, we are free. But we are not free to sin. We are not free to live any kind of life that we want to live. In Romans 6:15 Paul wrote, “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!” Paul dispels any doubt that one might have by saying “Certainly not!” Freedom in Christ is not a license to sin.

Now I want to talk about another false view of freedom in Christ. Some people say that freedom in Christ means that we no longer are slaves. That is absolutely false. We **are** still slaves. But we no longer are **slaves to sin**. The Bible teaches that we are still slaves. But to what are we a slave? In Romans 6:18 Paul said, “Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” No longer are we slaves to the Old Law. No longer are we under bondage to that Law. But we are still slaves—to Christ! We are slaves to God and His righteousness if we are willing to do what He says. In Romans 6:20-22 Paul said,

“When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

People do not like to think of themselves as slaves. But the Bible teaches that we are slaves. Whether we want to be slaves or not, we are either slaves to the world, or we are slaves to God and righteousness. Some people say, “I want a little bit of the world, but I also want God, and I want Christ to be my Savior. But I still want to do some of the things of the world. I still want to go out and party, drink alcohol, have a good time, and go to clubs and dance. I still want to be able to forsake the assembly [which the Bible condemns in Hebrews 10:25]. But I still love God, and I want Him to be my favorite.” A person cannot do that. We must be a slave either to God or to the world. James 4:4 says, “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” If we are participating in the sinful things of the world, that means that we are God's enemies because we choose to live that kind of lifestyle. That is why it is so important that we understand that just because we are free does not mean that we no longer are any type of slave. We are indeed a slave, but we are not a slave to the Old Law. We are now a slave to God and righteousness. I wanted us to look at some of these false views because so many people believe that these are what it means to be free in Christ. The Scriptures teach us that this is not the case.

So what does it mean to have Christian freedom? We have discussed what Christian freedom does **not** mean. So what **does** it mean? First and foremost, we no longer are under a law that is impossible to follow. In Galatians 3:11 Paul wrote, “That no one is justified by

the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.'" Under the Old Law in and of itself, no one could be justified. We now live under a New Law. We no longer are under bondage (the Old Law). The New Law is freedom compared to the Old Law. From Hebrews 4:15 we know that only Christ could keep the Old Law perfectly. It confined everyone under sin and condemned everyone. But now we are under the New Law, through which we can be justified. Do we live under a law today? People sometimes misunderstand (through their own lack of knowledge) what Paul was teaching, and thus they say, "Paul says that we are no longer under any law at all." That, of course, is not true. In the context, Paul is talking about the Old Law. We today are indeed under a law. Romans 4:14 tells us that if there is sin, then there is a law. There definitely is sin today; thus, there is a law. We simply need to know what law it is. From Galatians 6:2 we see it defined as the law of Christ. Paul wrote, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Some have said that we are not under any law. We no longer are under the Old Mosaic Law. But we are under a law—the New Law, the "law of Christ." In Romans 3:27 Paul could not have been any clearer than he was when he wrote, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith." Is there a law? Absolutely. People say, "We no longer are under the law. We are under faith." We **are** under law. Even faith is described as a law—"the New Law of faith, the Law of Christ. The great thing about this is that we can be saved and justified under the New Law. Under the Old Law no one could be justified. But under the New Law anyone can if he is willing to be obedient to the commands of God.

Another great freedom that we have is the Mediator to Whom we have access. We have an Advocate with the Father. In 1 Timothy 2:5-6 we read, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." If we are Christians, and if we live faithfully under the freedom that Christ has given us, Christ is our Mediator. In 1 John 2:1-2 John wrote,

"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

Anyone can be saved. Anyone can possess freedom in Christ. It is not just for Jews, but is for anyone who is willing to follow God's commands (Heb. 5:9). If we are obedient, Christ will be the Author of our eternal salvation. Anyone can have Christian freedom, and then can have Christ as an Advocate before the Father. But we must obey the commands of God. Today we no longer have a day of atonement. We have access to God, Who forgives us of our sins if we remain faithful. He does not simply roll over our sins. He does not continually remember them. He forgives them.

Another great freedom that we possess is the knowledge that we are walking in the light. When we are baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, it is at that point that we come in contact with the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16). The great thing about the freedom we possess is that once we become Christians by coming in contact with Christ's blood, if we continue to walk in the light, then we always have the blood cleansing us. We read in 1 John 1:7-9,

"If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Can we live any type of life we want to live? Of course not. We already have seen that this is not what Paul was saying. We understand that we must walk in the light. What does it mean to "walk in the light"? It means that when we sin, we confess our sins. We repent of

those sins, and do not continue in them. If we will do that, then Christ's blood will continually cleanse us. We do not have to be rebaptized every time we sin. Once we are baptized, we have come in contact with that blood. If we are faithful, that blood continues to cleanse us. What a great freedom we have—knowing that Christ's blood will always cleanse us if we walk faithfully, confess our sins, repent when we sin, and no longer walk in sin.

Another great freedom in Christ is freedom from our conscience regarding sins from our past. We saw earlier that God no longer remembers our past sins. Nor do we have to continue to think about them. We do not have a day of remembrance. We can forget our sins. In Hebrews 9:14 we read, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" In Hebrews 10:19 we read, "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus..." We no longer have to have a day of atonement or a day of remembrance regarding our sins. Does this mean that there will be no consequences that result from our past sins? No, because the Bible teaches that, at times, there will be consequences from our past sins. Does this mean that God will not forgive us? No. But does it mean that we still will have to face those consequences? Absolutely. Think about a young girl who has a child out of wedlock because she committed sexual immorality. She can be forgiven of that sin. But the baby is still going to be born. Think about someone who has cheated on his spouse, and his spouse has put him away for fornication (Mt. 19:9). Does that mean that the person has to remain single? Absolutely. But does it mean that God has not forgiven the person's sin? No. God will forgive us. But there will still be consequences. Just because our sins are forgiven does not mean that consequences will not follow. Yet we will have the freedom in Christ, and the knowledge that our sins have been forgiven by God.

We also understand that we have been delivered from the wrath of God, which will be manifested against all sin and ungodliness. If we have freedom in Christ because we have been baptized and have lived faithfully in Christ, we will not have to suffer God's wrath. In 1 Thessalonians 1:10 we read of "Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come." We will be delivered from the terrible wrath that is to come. In Hebrews 10:27 we read of "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries." We will not have to endure that if we live faithfully. We still must fear God and keep His commandments. We still must realize that God is a righteous God. But we do not have to fear Hell or the thought of going there. We can be delivered from that. We can be scared or terrified by it, but at the same time realize that if we are faithful in Christ, we have the freedom of knowing that Hell will not be our eternal home because Heaven will be instead. How wonderful that is.

Another great freedom we possess is knowing that we have been delivered from the tyranny of Satan. No longer can Satan do anything to us if we are living faithfully. He can tempt us or do anything else he wants to. But if we are living faithfully in Christ, we can resist him. We are to flee him, and he will flee from us if we resist him. In 2 Timothy 2:26 we read, "that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." We can escape. If we are in Christ, we have escaped from Satan. This does not mean that we cannot later fall away if we choose to. But if we are faithful to God, then there is nothing that can happen to us so long as we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. In John 10:28-29 we find some comforting words from Christ.

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

Does this mean that we cannot leave ourselves? Does it mean that if we have freedom in Christ, we cannot leave ourselves? Of course not. We have the freedom to leave. That is something about which people do not think at times. Yes, we are free in Christ. And yes, we have a lot of great blessings. Yet at the same time we must realize that Paul was warning people that they were falling away. They were using their freedom as a way to actually leave Christ and to go back under bondage. We, too, have that choice. If there comes a time in our lives when we no longer want to be faithful, then we can make that choice. No one can separate us from the love of God except us.

It is a great blessing to know that we have freedom in Christ. But have **you** done what the Bible says so that you can have this freedom? Have you obeyed the truth by being baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38)? If you have yet to obey the truth, we pray today that you will obey the Gospel of Christ.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR GALATIANS LESSON 3 (CHAPTER 5)

1. According to Galatians 3:27, how does one receive freedom in Christ?
2. According to Acts 2:38, when does a person receive forgiveness of sins?
3. According to Acts 22:16, when does a person receive forgiveness of sins?
4. According to Revelation 1:5, how did Christ wash away our sins?
5. According to Romans 6:3-4, at what point does a person come into contact with the saving blood of Christ?
6. In Galatians 5:1, Paul had something to say about freedom in Christ. What was it?
7. In Galatians 5:1, what did Paul urge the Christians in Galatia **not** to do?
8. In Romans 6:1, what two questions did Paul ask?
9. In Romans 6:2, how did Paul answer the two questions he had asked in the previous verse?
10. What question did Paul ask in Galatians 2:17?
11. What answer did Paul provide in Galatians 2:17 for the question he asked in that verse?
12. What important point is found in Hebrews 10:26?
13. In Colossians 3:5-6, Paul speaks of something that will come upon “the sons of disobedience.” What is it?
14. In Ephesians 4:22, what did Paul tell Christians to do?
15. In Romans 6:15, Paul asked and answered a question. What was the question, and what was the answer?
16. In Romans 6:20-22, what two types of slaves did Paul mention?
17. Of the two types of slaves mentioned by Paul in Romans 6:20-22, what kind of slaves should Christians strive to be?
18. According to James 4:4, if we choose to be friends with the world, what does that do to our relationship with God?
19. According to 1 John 2:1-2, what is one of the great blessings of freedom in Christ?
20. According to 1 John 1:7, what is another great blessing of freedom in Christ?
21. In John 10:28-29, what did Christ promise those who remain faithful to Him?